

PRESS RELEASE

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BELOIT CRACK DEALER SENTENCED TO LIFE

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Arthur Conner, 32, of Beloit, Wisconsin, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge John C. Shabaz for distributing crack cocaine. Conner was convicted by a jury of this crime on July 31, 2007. Judge Shabaz sentenced Conner to life in prison.

At the sentencing hearing, the government presented evidence that Conner distributed over 270 ounces of crack cocaine in the Beloit area during the time frame of May 2006 to January 2007. Conner picked up the cocaine from three sources, including one in Rockford, Illinois, one in South Beloit, Illinois, and one in Beloit. According to witnesses, Conner picked up primarily crack cocaine from his sources, but occasionally purchased powder cocaine and used associates to cook the powder cocaine into crack cocaine.

The government also presented evidence that Conner used seven different homes in Beloit as "safehouses" to store his crack cocaine and to bag it into smaller amounts for distribution to other drug dealers and crack customers. According to

witnesses, Conner bagged the cocaine in front of his girlfriends and their small children at these various locations. In one location, Conner hid the crack cocaine in the kitchen freezer and in a pile of clothes in his bedroom. In another location, he stored crack cocaine in a box underneath a baby crib in his bedroom.

The government also presented evidence that Conner had a distribution network of five associates who distributed nine ounces of crack cocaine for him every week. According to the evidence presented at trial, Conner used one of his associates to rent cars for three to four weeks at a time to use in the drug operation.

In imposing the life sentence on Conner, Judge Shabaz noted that Conner posed a high risk of recidivism and had no history of employment at age 32, other than selling crack cocaine. Judge Shabaz noted that Conner has not been rehabilitated by prison sentences in the past and would not be rehabilitated in the future. Judge Shabaz noted that Conner has been in and out of jail for the past 18 years, starting at age 14, and that every time he was released, he went back to selling crack cocaine. According to the judge, "This is a way of life that has to be stamped out. . . . We hope this sentence will be a deterrent to others." Judge Shabaz also noted that "the only way to keep people safe from a person with a propensity for crime like the defendant, is to incarcerate them for the rest of their lives."

The charges against Conner were the result of an investigation conducted by the Rock County Safe Streets Task Force comprised of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; the Drug Enforcement

Administration; the Rock County Sheriff's Department; the Beloit Police Department; the Janesville Police Department; and the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation-Narcotics Bureau. To date, a total of 46 defendants have been convicted of federal drug and gun charges resulting from Task Force investigations. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Daniel J. Graber and Paul W. Connell.

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